(a) whether it is a fact that zinc prices have been doubled in the last two years;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps are being taken to keep the prices under control?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) Zinc is produced by M/s. Hindustan Zinc Ltd., a public sector undertaking, and M/s. Cominco Binani Zinc Ltd., a private sector undertaking. Zinc produced by these undertakings do not meet the domestic requirements. The shortfall in the requiremnet is met by imports made by MMTC. The price of zinc increased during the last two years is given below:—

	Rs. per tonne
September, 1986	Rs. 28,500/-
August, 1988	Rs. 46,000/-

(b) The increase in zinc prices is mainly due to increase in the LME prices, corresponding increase in import duty, and fluctuation in foreign exchange rate.

(c) Prices of Zinc and other non-ferrous metals are fixed keeping in view relevant factors by the Inter-Ministrial Committee every month. The matters concerning availability and price of zinc are under constant watch.

Development of Zinc deposits and Installation of Zinc-Lead Smelter Plant in Rajasthan

2203. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal has been cleared by Government allowing Hindustan Zinc Ltd. to develop zinc deposits and instal a zinc-lead smelter plant in Rajasthan; and

(b) if so, what are the salient features theroef?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) A proposal of M/s. Hindustan Zinc Limited, a Central Government Undertaking to develop the Ramoura-Agucha Zinc-Lead deposit in Bhilwara District, and based thereon to set up a Zinc-Lead Smelter at Chanderiya in Chittorgarh District of Rajasthan was considered by the Government in 1986 and approval was conveyed for completion of certain *preinvestment activities leading* to preparation of firm cost estimates before taking up an investment decision. Firm cost estimates have since been prepared and these are under the active consideration of the Government.

(b) The salient features of the proposed project are development of a Zinc-Lead Mine of 3,000 tonnes per day ore capacity with a matching beneficiation plant at Rampura-Agucha and Lead-Zinc Smelter at Chanderiya with a capacity of 70,000 tonnes per annum Zinc and 35,000 tonnes per annum Lead, based on Imperial Smelting Process.

Cost of Copper Production

2204. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any report has been submitted by the Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices on cost of copper production; and

(b) if so, what are the major findings and recommendations thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) and (b) The Bureau of Industrial Costs and Prices (BICP) was requested to take up a study on the normative cost of production of copper produced by Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL), the sole public sector undertaking engaged in production of copper in the country. The report of the BICP has been received by the Government and is presently under consideration.